

PROJECT SUMMARY

SNC Reference
Number

SNC 080008

County: Shasta

Applicant: American Land Conservancy

Project Title: JS Ranch Easement Acquisition

PROJECT GOAL

This project will acquire a conservation easement on the JS Ranch to: (1) prevent subdivision of important wildlife and fish habitat; (2) help the region remain an economically sustainable ranching community; and (3) secure 5,975 acres of open space and 33,400 linear feet of perennial stream in an area witnessing significant development pressures.

PROJECT SCOPE

This 5,975-acre ranch includes 33,400 linear feet of perennial streams (Old Cow Creek and Clover Creek).

The American Land Conservancy will purchase a conservation easement on the ranch, helping to preserve agricultural and ecological resources on the site. The JS Ranch is part of a larger California Department of Fish and Game project area covered under its Cow Creek Conceptual Area Management Plan (CAPP). This plan aims to conserve 109,000 acres of ranch lands and open space in the Cow Creek Watershed.

This easement will help fulfill objectives of this plan in several ways. It keeps an area with diverse habitats under single ownership, it includes habitat for sensitive species in the Cow Creek watershed, it includes important anadromous fish habitat (one of the streams on the ranch is targeted by DFG for a restoration project downstream which aims to restore traditional spawning activity on the portion of the creek flowing through the ranch), and it represents 5.5% of the CAPP's land protection objectives and is located in the heart of the CAPP boundary.

The easement will also help protect a working ranch operation in an area experiencing rapid conversion of land from productive agricultural operations to residential and "ranchette" development. Located along a major transportation corridor, the ranch is at high risk of development and subdivision if it is not protected. Were the ranch to be subdivided and developed, water quality, both on the ranch and downstream, would be impacted, and important wildlife habitat would be forever lost.

The estimated cost of the easement is \$3.4 million to \$5.1 million (based on an appraisal of the property value without the easement, and estimating the easement value). If awarded a grant, funds from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy will be applied in full toward the acquisition costs. The requested \$1,000,000 in SNC funds will cover approximately 25% of the easement purchase price. ALC is in discussions with the

Department of Fish and Game, Region 1 (for Wildlife Conservation Board funding) for conservation easement funding.

Other costs include a Stewardship Endowment of \$75,000 to be paid by the landowner, due diligence costs of \$15,000, also to be paid by the property owner, and \$20,000 in staff time, to be paid by ALC. As of the date of this application, all of these additional funds (\$110,000 total) have been committed to the project by the landowner. Though a final budget cannot yet be determined, SNC funds will be leveraged with at least \$2,510,000 in funds from other sources, and possibly as much as \$4,210,000.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No letters are available at this time.

SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Easement acquisition	Summer, 2009
Final reports to SNC	Late Summer, early Fall, 2009

SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Easement acquisition	\$1,000,000
SNC GRANT TOTAL	\$1,000,000